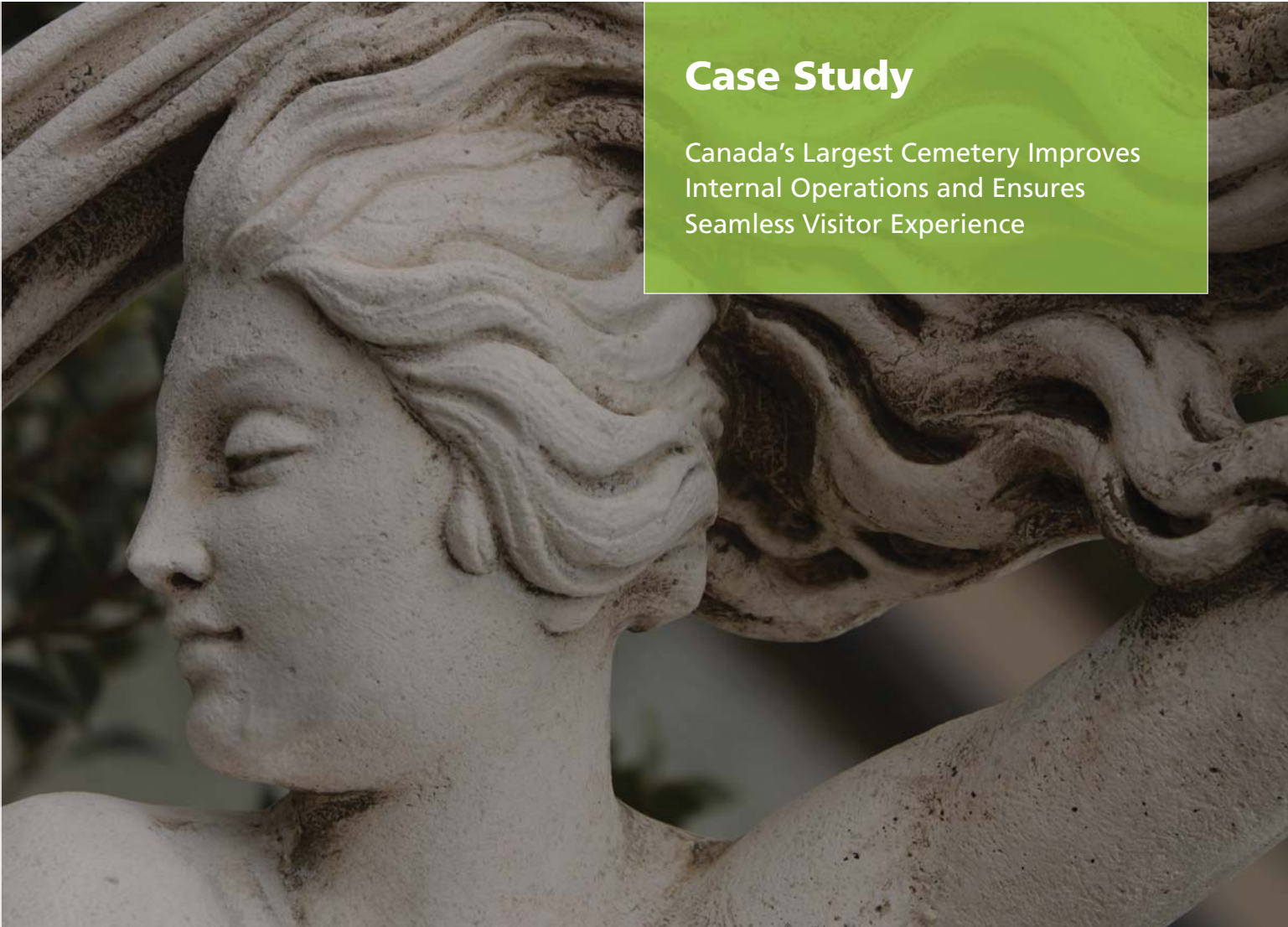




**ESRI Canada**

## Case Study

Canada's Largest Cemetery Improves Internal Operations and Ensures Seamless Visitor Experience



# Cemetery Realizes Better Planning and Management through GIS Technology

Located in Montreal Québec, Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges is Canada's largest cemetery and has been leveraging GIS technology for over 12 years to manage its vast grounds. The cemetery has developed several customized applications to overcome a number of challenges and improve visitor service.

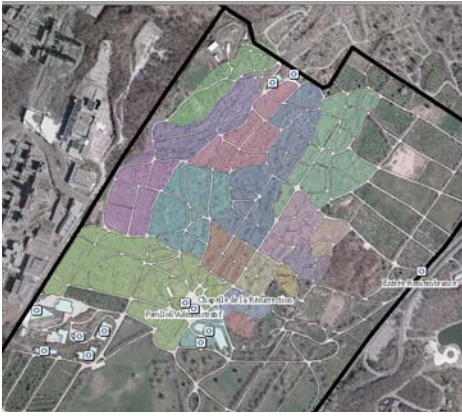


## Challenge

In the late 1990's, the cemetery began to receive an influx of phone calls and on-site requests from visitors who required assistance in locating the burial sites of their deceased loved ones. With almost 1 million people buried in the cemetery, visitors would easily become lost and were unable to locate the section they were searching for within the cemetery.

Often in need of assistance, visitors would appeal to the cemetery's internal staff members who would search their databases, mark up a paper map with the appropriate location and send the visitor on their way. This process was extremely time consuming for both the visitor (who often had to wait in line) and cemetery staff members.

Many additional challenges were posed by the sheer size of the cemetery. When new sections were created, they would be sketched out on paper, and these approximations would often fall short of being completely accurate. Sales staff also had a difficult time keeping track of the cemetery plots that were available, reserved or sold, as there was no centralized location to view this information.



The interactive terminal where visitors can look up their deceased loved one by name or section, and print their map.



An example of photographs that are integrated into the interactive terminal, depicting landmarks such as the Mausolée Sainte-Marguerite-d'Youvil.

“With this new application, our customers feel more confident and our staff benefits from a tool that simplifies their tasks. We increased our productivity and the satisfaction level of our customers.”

**Diane St-Pierre**

IT Manager

Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

## Solution

To improve the visitor experience, ESRI Canada collaborated with cemetery staff to develop two customized, touch-screen applications that are housed in interactive terminals. Visitors simply type in the name of the deceased person they are searching for and are instantly provided with a map that marks the location of the plot within the cemetery. Visitors can also take advantage of the embedded printing functionality to print their map and keep it on hand as they walk throughout the grounds.

The cemetery has also leveraged ESRI's Server technology to make their entire database available on the Web, so that visitors can look up the plot location prior to arriving on-site. This Web-mapping application also provides public access to the cemetery's database so that users can research individuals who have been buried there.

To better manage their vast grounds, a desktop application was created that maps out the entire layout of the cemetery including all of the various fields and sections. GPS units were used to collect way points and the information was then uploaded into ESRI's ArcGIS Desktop. A second application was also developed that provides sales staff with instant access to data on available, reserved and sold cemetery plots.

## Benefits

The inclusion of interactive terminals within the cemetery has eliminated the need for visitors to stop by the Information Booth and wait in line for assistance. This has greatly improved the visitor experience and also helped to free up staff resources. By integrating the same data from the interactive terminals into a Web-mapping application, the cemetery is able to provide public access to its sizeable database that can be leveraged as a useful tool for genealogical research.

A customized desktop application built on ESRI's ArcGIS platform provides an accurate representation of the cemetery's layout for better planning and management. The application is easily updated every time a change in layout occurs, such as the addition of a new section. In addition, sales staff can now quickly and easily access up-to-the-minute information on available cemetery plots, so that they can focus on making more reservations.

## Moving Forward

In constant evolution, the Cimetière Notre-Dame-des-Neiges now wishes to integrate all infrastructure located on their property, such as gas, fiber optic, waste water and electrical network. The objective is to make critical information readily available to more people and reinforce the first mission of the cemetery which is offering superior, professional and high-quality customer service.



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Founded in 1984, ESRI Canada provides enterprise geographic information systems (GIS) solutions that empower businesses, governments, and educational institutions to make timely, informed and mission-critical decisions by leveraging the power of maps. The company distributes the world's leading GIS software from ESRI, Telvent Miner and Miner, Azteca Systems and other technology partners. Headquartered in Toronto, the company serves over 10,000 customers from 16 regional offices across Canada.

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